ed? 6. Do others besides heathen use vain repetition in prayer? 7. Are all true prayers answered? 8. Are they always answered in the way we look for the answer? 9. How many of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are for God? 10. How many are for men? 11. Is this prayer to be used in all the prayers we offer? 12. What is a proper use of this prayer? 13. Who only may pray this prayer? 14. Can one pray it consistently who does not forgive his fellowmen? 15. How can God answer prayer without a miracle? 16. Do we always know when our prayers are answered?

A Few Rules for Prayer

1 We should pray believingly.
2 We should pray reverently.
3 We should pray trustfully.
4 We should pray secretly.
5 We should pray forgivingly.

Thoughts for Young People

1. We should pray. Man needs help from God, and he can obtain it through prayer. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

2. We should pray in secret, for only thus can our hearts be poured out before God.

3. We should pray in the spirit of children, looking to God as our Father and going to him with our needs.

For Special Study

Prayer: (1) What is prayer? (2) The unacceptable prayer. (3) The acceptable prayer. (4) Benefits of secret prayer. (5) How God answers prayer. (6) Instances of prayer in the Bible. (7) Answers to prayer in your own experience. . . . The Lord's Prayer: (1) What it reveals concerning God. (2) What it shows concerning men. (3) What it requires of those who offer it.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The disciples once came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, teach us to pray." We cannot ask anything better. If we know how to pray, we touch the secret spring which opens God's storehouse of blessing. Do you know how to pray? Jesus says, "true prayer" is not using vain repetitions, but it is speaking sincerely to God from the heart. We may bow our heads ever so devoutly and repeat the words he has taught us and not really pray at all. We have known the Lord's paryer always; the sentences glide from our lips without our thinking of them; over and over again we say that prayer, at home, in church, in the Sunday-school; but is it anything more than a vain repetition? And yet it is such a beautiful prayer! It is so simple every little child can learn it, and so comprehensive that the most advanced Christain can ask for no more than these petitions, when rightly understood, express.

In it we are taught to call God "Our Father." A father loves to give good gifts to his children. We are taught to hallow his name. Dare we speak to a holy God carelessly, without reverence? We ask for the coming of his kingdom. Everything would be right in the world if God ruled in all hearts. We say, "Thy will be done on earth as in heaven." Heaven is a place of perfect happiness; God's will, then, must be good. The sweetest thing we can desire is the will of one who loves us. We understand God when we are afraid to say, "Thy will be done." The prayer for daily bread covers all our temporal needs. Our father cares for the birds, and clothes the grass of the field; much more will he care for us. We ask for forgiveness for our sin, as we forgive others. Ah, this searches the depths of our hearts. Do we forgive those who have offended us? If not, we are asking God not to forgive us when we use those words. Dare we say them thoughtlessly? We ask to be kept from temptation and delivered from evil. Would you not be afraid to live without the protection of God in this world, so full of dangers? Surely we should offer this petition not in word only, but from an earnest sense of need. And we close by giving God all honor and praise. What a mockery it is if we do not really mean it. Think what we ask in this blessed prayer; think what good things we receive if we ask sincerely; and never again let us repeat the words with our lips only while the heart does not say them, too. How tenderly Jesus invites us to come close to God our Father and talk with him as with a friend. "Enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, and pray to thy Father in secret." Tell him all that is in your heart. There is no spot on earth so sweet as the quiet place where we talk alone with God.

The opening words, "Our Father which art in heaven," gives confidence at the very outset, for they remind us of the relationship existing between God and man, and of the exalted position—and hence, power—of God. Then follows the three petitions concerning God's glory:

1. That his name be hallowed or held in reverence. This is petition that God's goodness and power might be recognized and acknowledged by all men.

2. Thy kingdom come. If God's name is to be hallowed throughout the earth, it must come thro the extension of his kingdom in the hearts of men. The extension of the kingdom is by the addition of the individual heart, for it is only as the individual heart acknowledges the King that the kingdom may come in its fullness. This work of extension, then, is work with the individual.

3. Thy will be done. God's kingdom is to overcome the kingdoms of the earth thro the doing of his will by the citizens of that kingdom. Draw from the class suggestions as to how God makes known his will unto man, such as (1) By means of the Bible, which gives great guiding principles; (2) By his providence, showing us by the shaping of events how he would have us act; (3) By directly impressing our consciousness.

The following four petitions concern man's conscious needs:

1. Give us our daily bread. Trace back to their source the supplies needful for our earthly wants and in every case we come to God. This petition is necessary, as it constantly reminds us that "every good and perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." It is also a prayer for the supply of the wants of our higher nature.

2. Forgive as we also have forgiven. How can we ask God to forgive us if we do not show a forgiving spirit to our fellowmen? God forgives us and does not remember against us our iniquities. Thus should we forgive others by not remembering the evil they have done us.

3. Lead us not into temptation. Trials are needful for the development of character, but this is a prayer which expresses our conscious weakness, and is directly opposed to that spirit of presumption which would deliberately lead us into temptation.

4. Deliver us from evil. From whatever hinders our highest spiritual development, or tends directly to destroy spiritual life, which is communion with God through harmony of will and desires.

Specific Application. As a man prays so ought he to work. God expects us to answer our own prayers so far as lies in our power. When we pray for the universal rule of God in this world we ought to work for that rule, beginning with ourselves; when we pray for needed supplies and strength we ought to put forth all our efforts to obtain them; when we pray for forgiveness we ought to manifest a forgiving spirit.—*S. S. Journal.*

In the mingled love and reverence with which it teaches us to approach our Father in heaven, in the spirituality with which it leads us to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, in the spirit of universal love and forgiveness which it inculcates, in the plural form throughout which forever excludes selfishness from our petitions, in the fact of its seven petitions one only is for any earthly blessing, and that the simplest, even in that exquisite brevity which shows us how little God desires that prayer should be made a burden and weariness, it is, indeed, the pearl of prayers.—*Canon Farrar.*

Our Bible School

PRAYER MEETING TOPICS

CHARACTER STUDIES—SAMSON

I. Biography.

a. A child of promise. Judges 13:3-5.
1. Note the charge against strong drink.
2. See subject "Nazarite" in Bible Helps.

b. Gets into trouble by marrying against his parent's wishes. Judges 14:2, 3, 10 20.

c. Sets the Philistine's fields on fire. Judges 5:1-8.

d. Defends his nation against the Philistines. Judges 15:14, 15, 20.

e. Robbed of the secret of his strength. Judges 16:19-21.

f. His death. Judges 16:22-30.

II. Life Lessons.

a. Samson's faults. 1. Revengeful.